THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) During the visit of General Pervez Musharraf to China on February 17-18, 2000, Chinese official media quoted China's President Jiang Zemin as having stated that he would like to see a more stable and prosperous Pakistan in the future. Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji was reported as having stated that irrespective of international or domestic changes, the Chinese Government will continue to foster its comprehensive partnership with Pakistan.

(b) While it is for China and Pakistan to decide the nature of their relationship, we remain concerned at certain aspects of this relationship which adversely affect our security. This includes Sino-Pak defence co-operation including in the nuclear weapons and missile development programme. We have made known our concerns to the Chinese side.

(c) We seek friendly, co-operative, good-neighbourly and mutually beneficial relationship with China. This year, India and China are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The President stated in his Address to Parliament on 23rd February 2000 that he would undertake a State visit to China in May this year.

(d) The international community has been sensitised to Pakistan's compulsive hostility towards India and its sponsorship of terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and elsewhere in India. The international community now recognises Pakistan's state sponsorship of terrorism and its impact on the security of India and the region.

National Command Authority in Pakistan

1566. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Command Authority (NCA) with an apex body, *viz.* Employment Control Committee (ECC) has been set up; in Pakistan to control and command her nuclear weapons;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is proposed to take similar steps in India and set up a similar authority; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Yes Sir, Government have seen press reports to this effect.

(b) Government closely monitors and continuously assesses all developments with regard to Pakistan's nuclear and missile capabilities. Government remains fully committeed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interests in accordance with its own threat perceptions.

(c) and (d) India is committed to exercise strict civilian control over it nuclear assets. India has standard safety procedures and practices for the manufacture, transportation, storage and use of stores containing explosive substances and for the handling of the nuclear materials. The system of civilian control and technical management of nuclear assets is updated, as and when required, in the light of contemporary needs.

Eviction of Pak occupied Kashmir

1567. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether efforts are being made by Government to get back Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK);

(b) if so, the total Indian territory now under Pakistan occupation; and

(c) the details of the various efforts made by Government to get back POK?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) The entire state of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. An area of approximately 78,000 sq kms. is under Pakistan's illegal and forcible occupation. Government are committed to resolving all issues with Pakistan through peaceful negotiations and direct bilateral dialogue.

Open skies agreement with USA

1568. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Government is looking forward to negotiate the open skies agreement with India and to increase economic cooperation as